PD-ABN 137
91103

PROJECT ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

PROJECT TITLE:	**EDUCATIONAL POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY PROJECT**
PROJECT NUMBER:	645-0230
ORIGINAL LOP:	$6,900,000
AMENDED LOP:	$7,102,000
COUNTRY:	Swaziland
FINAL IMPACT EVALUATION:	July 1996

I. SUMMARY OF SERVICES PERFORMED:

The Educational Policy, Management and Technology Project (EPMT) was inaugurated in August, 1990 as a 6-year, $6.9 million project. Out-of-contract activities were initiated in 1989. Following the mid-term evaluation in 1993, the life of the project was extended for a seventh year and the USAID contribution was increased to $7.1 million. Additional contributions of $4.3 million from the Government of Swaziland (GOS) and $200,000 from the United States Peace Corps brought the total cost to $11.6 million.

The goal of the EPMT project was to establish an efficient and high quality human resource base for sustained development and economic growth in Swaziland. The project purpose was to improve both the quality and the efficiency of basic education. It was designed to achieve this purpose by providing support in five areas:

1) Continuous Assessment (CA): To introduce a comprehensive system of mastery learning, testing and remediation into all primary schools;

2) Head Teacher Management Training (HTMT): To provide specialized training for all school heads to equip them to better manage their schools and improve the quality of education therein;

3) Management Information Systems (MIS): To give decision-makers accurate, useful information about the education system on which they can base effective policies and plans;

4) Organizational Development (OD): To identify and support policies and practices necessary to improve educational development and management, using information from the MIS for rational decision-making and analytical research; and

5) Career Guidance (CG): To help students make more realistic decisions about their futures.

All five components were inter-linked, the ultimate goal being to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the system so that learning in the classroom would be enhanced, and so that students would be better prepared to eventually enter the world of work.

Building on two previous USAID-funded education projects - one in curriculum design, the other in teacher training - EPMT represents the last bilateral American assistance in education to Swaziland for some time to come, the result of USAID's move to a regional office in Botswana and its de-emphasis of educational support in Southern Africa. In many ways, EPMT is an appropriate capstone to more than 20 years of USAID support in education in Swaziland.

The project operated under the auspices of the Ministry of Education (MOE). Implementation issues were decided by a steering committee comprised of representatives from MOE headquarters, heads of units responsible for the implementation of the various components, teacher training colleges (TTCs), the national curriculum center (NCC), the in-service teacher training department (INSET), all four regions of the country, and USAID. The Institute for International Research (IIR) of Washington D.C. was competitively selected to provide technical assistance, training and various learning materials. Sub-contracts were issued to the University of Massachusetts, the University of New Mexico and the Mitchell Group for support in training for item specification (testing component), technical assistance for head teacher management training, and for the provision of commodities respectively.

The mid-term evaluation pointed out that "by any standards, this is an enormously ambitious project, attempting to bring about change at every level of Swazi education, from the way teachers teach to the way principals administer to the way policy is formed to the way students find jobs." Subsequent to the mid-term evaluation of the project in July 1993, a shift of emphasis was introduced. The project focused more on the continuous assessment component, in which training of teachers was given more attention. In addition, it was agreed by all parties concerned (GOS, USAID, and IIR) that CA should concentrate on Grades 1 to 4 during the remaining life of project, thus reducing its commitment from Grade 7 to Grade 4. This allowed implementers to provide more depth in the training effort and allowed the project to include all teachers in Grades 1 to 4 in its training program. In order to accomplish these new aims, resources were shifted from the career guidance, MIS and Organizational Development components. As a result, in order to strengthen policy support work, the OD component coordinated donor support from multiple sources, particularly non-lending support from the World Bank, grants from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Children's' Fund (UNICEF), and various in-kind support from agencies such as the World University Service of Canada (WUSC). Moreover, a computer-based policy support tool was developed in collaboration with the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) of Raleigh, North Carolina, funded by a Japanese Trust Grant

through the World Bank. This change of emphasis both deepened the project's work in the classroom and broadened the scope of policy support work. The effect was to provide the context for reform and lay the ground work for real sustainable development by meeting such issues as staff rationalization and resource re-allocation in the sector head on.

The final evaluation in July, 1996 noted that "it would not be an exaggeration to say that EPMT has had a profound impact on Swazi education, especially in the primary schools where CA has begun a process that may change forever the way teachers evaluate children." A paradigm shift has been made from teaching to learning, from the teacher to the learner. With regard to sustainability, the evaluation team found each of the project components to be viable with existing Swazi expertise and resources. In their opinion, EPMT overall has been a very successful project, with the various components taking root with great growth potential. "In the end, this project will have made a profound difference in the quality of education in Swaziland."

A study on the impact of continuous assessment on children learning in the classroom was completed in June, 1996 by Dr. Joel Aronson. He compared pre-measurement data with post-measurement data, and also surveyed a variety of sources. He notes that CA is at the heart of educational reform in Swaziland, and asserts that "the effectiveness of the CA project has been generally recognized within Swaziland by GOS policy makers and most of the education community there." He concludes that "there can be confidence that substantial change *is* taking place and that students are learning better." In addition, he says, "there is an internal consistency (in data analyzed and impressions gained from people working in education) which supports the idea that the focus of primary education in Swaziland is, indeed, changing."

A monograph has been written with the purpose of "telling the EPMT story." It explores each component, describes the role of various actors on the stage, and also the twists and turns of implementation against the backdrop of the original project design. The audience for this document is two-fold: educators in Swaziland who have very little written material to base indigenous development thinking on, and graduate students in development education in universities abroad. The monograph writers concluded that there can be no doubt that "the perennially-stated USAID goal of policy reform in education is coming to pass, oddly as USAID is leaving the country."

II. STATUS OF COMPLETION OF PROJECT ELEMENTS:

The EPMT project has produced a long list of impressive project outputs and educational inputs:

Training:

1) Six individuals, 2 from INSET, 2 from the CA unit, and 2 from Educational Testing, Guidance and Psychological Services (ETGPS) have received Masters degrees from U.S. universities;

2) Seven individuals, 2 from INSET, 3 from the CA unit, and one each from ETGPS and MIS have gone to the U.S. on internships or study tours.

3) More than 4,500 school personnel, including all teachers in grades 1-4 and all primary and secondary school head teachers, have received almost 46,000 days of training, including 25,847 days of training in CA, 18,375 days of training in HTMT and 1,692 days of training in guidance.

4) One hundred and twenty-one trainers have been trained through Training Of Trainers (TOTs) programs and are presently being used to conduct in-service teacher training in CA, HTMT and guidance.

Materials production:

1) The CA unit has produced 144 separate publications including pilot tests and tests for all three terms along with teacher instructions, item specifications and objectives for math and English, grades 1-4; pilot tests, item specifications and objectives for math and English, grade 5; math and English posters, grade 1; remediation and enrichment materials for math and English, grade 1; an item bank for math and English, grade 3.

2) The HTMT component has published a four-volume set of training materials totaling more than 1,000 pages for the training of head teachers in Personnel Management, Organizational Development, Money Management and Budgeting, and Instructional Leadership.

3) The ETGPS unit of the MOE has produced 6 kinds of guidance materials (books, units and lessons) for use in the primary and secondary schools in Swaziland. In the primary schools, a career guidance unit has a permanent place in the grade 7 social studies text.

Policy Support Dialogue and outcomes:

1) Four workshops were conducted with appropriate stakeholders on policy support itself, on basic education, on assessment and examinations, and on education and the world of work.

2) A National Education Symposium was conducted with 400 stakeholders, including parliamentarians and private sector representatives, focusing on efficiency, effectiveness and quality.

3) A Quality Working Group was established, as an outcome of the Symposium, to plan a comprehensive quality improvement program for primary education.

4) An education and training sector committee was formed to map out an educational development strategy. A report entitled "Our Children First" puts basic education firmly at the forefront of educational development for the next 25 years.

Expected results and performance are summarized below. The end of project status indicators (EOPS) are listed first, followed by the baseline data at inauguration of project, and finally by the current situation (i.e. at close of project):

a. Number of students graduating on time from Grade 3 increased from 1989 base figure of 462 per 1,000 Grade 1 student entrants.

Baseline data. The education system has experienced rapid growth over the past 20 years. There are twice as many schools, three times as many students and almost four times the number of teachers. Low efficiency ratios characterize the system. Students repeat often and many students leave school before completing the primary and secondary cycles. Using 1989 rates of progression, the efficiency ratio[1] was 1.82 and the number of children graduating primary school on time was 165/1000. The efficiency ratio in the lower grades was 1.44 and the number of children graduating from Grade 3 on time was 462 per thousand entrants in Grade 1.

Current situation. Derived from the latest published statistics (1995 flow rates applied to 1996 intake), the efficiency ratio in Year 7 of the project for all seven grades in the system decreased to 1.60. The number of children graduating primary school on time increased to 196/1000. Both these figures represent an improvement over the previous year's results: an efficiency ration of 1.63 and 189/1000 graduating on time. In the lower grades the efficiency ratio is 1.32, an improvement over the baseline figure as well as a successive improvement over the 1995 reporting of 1.40. The number of children graduating from Grade 3 on time increased to 496/1000 (1995: 471/1000). Continuous Assessment techniques were introduced to Grade 1 teachers in 1993 and Grade 2 teachers in 1994. Therefore, this is the second set of data on progression rates that reflect changes in behavior in Grade 1 and the first set that reflect changes in Grade 2.

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[1] The efficiency ratio is a measure derived from input divided by output. A value of 2.00, for instance, indicates that the education system is investing twice what it would if the system were completely efficient (in terms of money, staff, facilities), whereas a value of 1.00 would be ideal.

Significantly, repetition rates for Grade 1 children moving into Grade 2 dropped from 19.7% to 17% in 1994, critically reversing an upward trend recorded over the past several years. Of great significance in 1995 is a large decrease in the drop out rate for Grade 1, from 6.2% in 1994 to 2.8% in 1995. This is what one would expect to happen. Because some children have not repeated, they have not dropped out but progressed to the next level. Often these are children who need to learn how to learn, and clearly they must be learning with the increased emphasis in the system on testing and remediation. For the primary system as a whole, drop out has fallen from 46.4% in 1989 to 40.2% in 1994 to 33.6% in 1995. Since data trends can be obscured by variance from year to year, these improvements need to be monitored over a period of several years to determine whether continuous assessment techniques are indeed contributing to a sustainable change in classroom behavior.

b. All Grade 1-4 teachers are applying CA to teaching Math and English and have the skills and understanding to apply CA to other subjects.

Baseline data. In 1990, prior to the commencement of EPMT support for Continuous Assessment, no CA system existed nor were any primary teachers familiar with CA principles and techniques.

Current situation. Continuous Assessment is now operating in Grades 1,2,3 and 4 throughout the country. In January, 1993, Grade 1 teachers were trained in CA methodology in a five-day residential workshop. In January, 1994, Grade 2 teachers received training in CA methodology in another five-day residential workshop. In January, 1995, training was provided to Grade 3 teachers. In January 1996, Grade 4 teachers received training. The emphasis in the last three training workshops was on preparing the teachers to use CA methodology in their classrooms from the first day of school.

In February, 1994, the first of a series of zonal follow-up sessions were held for both 1st and 2nd Grade teachers. These were designed to help teachers deal with problems that they encountered in their classrooms and to introduce more CA methods and materials. Zonal follow-up sessions continued to be an important part of teacher training in CA and were planned for teachers of all 4 grades in which CA has been implemented. They were used to introduce teachers to new materials and concepts and to answer teachers' questions about implementing CA in their classrooms.

Regional workshops at the beginning of each year were followed by a series of zonal follow-up sessions to which teachers could bring their problems and where new information, materials and ideas could be disseminated.

A systematic observation scheme was established. It offered a vehicle through which CA staff, Regional Training Team (RTT) members, inspectors and others could see for themselves what is "working" and what is not. Training, materials,

etc., were modified based on the data from these observations. These observations continued although their frequency has been reduced in response to pressures to complete the first phases of the Remedial and Enrichment materials and the Item Bank.

A cadre of retired educationists wrote remedial and enrichment lessons for all lessons in the Grades 1 - 4 syllabi. The materials were published in the final month of the project and provided quality examples of how each objective can be remediated or enriched.

An Item Bank was established. Teachers were finding it difficult to devise valid test questions based on the item specifications supplied by the CA Unit. An Item Bank, of sample test questions, for Grade 3 was created which enables the Unit to disseminate to teachers valid items for all of the objectives they are to cover.

The Unit produced posterized tests for Grades 1 and 2 in math and English and in Grade 3 in math. These posters are re-usable for approximately three years, reducing the costs of testing in these grades. Other strategies for reducing the costs of testing were investigated.

c. **There is sufficient core of personnel (trainers and administrators) who are familiar with, and committed to, CA to expand CA methods to other subjects in Grades 1-4 and all subjects in Grades 5-7 after the Technical Assistance ends.**

Baseline data. Before the plan to introduce CA methodology into Swazi classrooms was developed beginning in 1990, there were no Swazis with the skills or experience to accomplish this.

Current situation. Regional Training Teams have been established. New members attend an annual five-day residential training workshop on CA methods; experienced members receive additional training in training methods. The emphasis is on training teachers from the upper primary grades as they will be needed for future training of classroom teachers as CA moves into Grades 5 - 7.

Head teachers have had both residential and periodic half-day training sessions in CA, and informational sessions have been provided to secondary and high school head teachers during head teacher management training sessions. The CA Unit updates Math and English panel members annually and holds seminars for staff of the Teacher Training Colleges. Three-day residential training workshops for Inspectors have been initiated. Many schools have begun to apply CA methodology to the teaching of other subjects.

d. **Head teachers in the country have the skills and understanding to manage their schools effectively.**

Baseline data. During 1990 - 1991, a needs assessment was carried out to determine management training needs in the system. This assessment included a curriculum review of previous management training programs for head teachers and data-collecting visits to 50 schools by teams of inspectors and INSET staff. A final report on the training needs assessment provides detailed information about the status of head teacher training as of that time. It lists 36 major categories of needs. One critical area identified is better financial management. No previous training had been carried out in this area, and all head teachers visited reported difficulties with the handling and reporting of money. Other critical needs were identified in the areas of organizational management, personnel management, and instructional leadership. In response, instructional materials were developed in each main component area.

Current situation. The three training cycles for primary head teachers and the one cycle for secondary/high school head teachers have been completed. These head teachers have been offered approximately 170 hours of instruction in the four components of POMI: Personnel Management, Organizational Management, Money Management and Budgeting, and Instructional Leadership. All of these head teachers had to take a qualifying examination in the four components. Successful head teachers were awarded certificates in four different ceremonies held at the New George Hotel. Several remediation tests have been conducted for head teachers who could not go through the examination.

e. MOE using empirically generated data to make policy and planning decisions.

Baseline data. The Research and Planning Unit was in a critical situation at the time the EPMT Project started in August, 1990. Management information was difficult to find. Scattered repositories of information, such as the Central Statistical Office (CSO), Teaching Service Commission (TSC), the accounts office, the examinations council, and central ministries, typically worked in isolation from each other. Senior MOE management were unable to retrieve information on a demand basis and were very skeptical about the reliability of these disparate sources. No central source of information or central monitoring system existed, making it difficult for the Ministry to manage information and establish monitoring systems. The annual school census which MOE traditionally conducted in competition with CSO had ceased to be operative. Records for 1988 had not been entered into a database by 1990 and lay scattered in various offices.

Current situation. A core MIS has been developed and brought into operation. Senior personnel in the MOE and external users regularly seek information from it on different aspects of the education system. Procedures for collection of data, data entry into the MIS databases and information dissemination have been established. With the help of EPMT-sponsored consultants, the TSC has computerized its personnel records and data entry personnel continue to update them. More than one MOE staff member are now familiar with various computer program applications and with analytical procedures. Information in the TSC

database is now incorporated into the MIS. When the CSO conducts its annual survey in April, it now encloses an MIS update survey as well. Information from this annual update is sent to Regional Education Offices (REOs) and used in the preparation of reports for both the MOE and external users. Increased emphasis has been placed on verification of the existing MIS database. Systems to compare, and act on, any discrepancies between the MIS data, the TSC data, the Treasury data, and the CSO data have been developed.

In addition, MIS supported policy analysis and the preparation of policy-related documents. This had the benefit of increasing understanding of the implications of various sets of information, provided by the MIS, and of ensuring that data collection, storage and dissemination continues to be demand-driven. To facilitate policy support work, the "Imfundvo" computer simulation model was developed. It relies heavily on the MIS database for current information.

The initiative to create a research-conscious environment for the MOE, and its various constituent parts, has taken root. This is perceived to be an important aspect of learning about what is taking place in the system and thus informing decision-makers who need to make appropriate policy and planning decisions. Various policy papers were written on staffing, financing of education, including scholarships, and on future education strategies.

Qualitative research methods have been used to undertake client consultation and a few classroom-based studies. These were intended to demonstrate to what use information available to the system can be put. A conscious effort was made to respond to existing systems needs, as perceived by decision-makers, thus ensuring that information is used for practical purposes, to help to solve practical problems and to respond to demand.

f. Increased awareness among students of career choices and resources for identifying employment options.

Baseline data. Before the development of the career guidance program at the Grade 7 level, there was no career guidance for primary schools. Presumably primary students were not aware of, or only had a limited awareness of, career choices. The only exceptions were the seventh grade students involved in the pilot test of guidance materials at four schools. In 1992 a baseline data survey was given to head teachers and educational leaders in four regions, to assess their awareness of the needs for career guidance, the availability and use of career resources, and their willingness to implement career guidance programs in their schools. About 200 responses were collected.

Current situation. The July, 1993, mid-term evaluation of the EPMT Project determined that the objectives of the Career Guidance component had been substantially accomplished and recommended that no further resources be expended by EPMT in support of this work. A new primary guidance lesson unit

has been completed and is awaiting implementation as part of the new Grade 7 Social Studies textbooks being distributed in 1995. Grade 7 teachers have already received preliminary training in preparation for the introduction of this unit. The Educational Testing, Guidance and Psychological Services (ETGPS) Unit is now fully staffed. Many of its officers have been trained with the Project's help, including two who earned Master's degrees in the United States. Orientation to career guidance concepts continues to be provided to students at Teacher Training Colleges on an on-going basis. Secondary students are also benefiting from the enhanced services that ETGPS can now provide. Their awareness of career options is improving. Later, the introduction of the Grade 7 Social Studies textbook and the availability of Primary Guidance Officers on the ETGPS meant that some tasks that would enhance work on this objective could be completed. Specifically, in-service teacher training could be supported so that Grade 7 teachers implement the new guidance unit effectively, and further training could be provided for new Primary Guidance Officers.

III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN TERMS OF PROJECT PURPOSE:

EPMT succeeded in its original purpose of improving both the quality and the efficiency of basic education. It met its objectives:

> The number of students graduating on time from grade 3 has increased from the 1989 base; repetition and drop-out are on the decline; and children are learning more and better.
>
> Teachers in grades 1 to 4 are applying CA to teaching Mathematics and English.
>
> Core personnel are in place who are now experts in CA, are committed to CA, and have the capabilities to expand CA methods to other subjects and to grades 5 to 7.
>
> Head teachers have the skills and understanding to manage their schools better.
>
> The Ministry of Education is using empirically generated data to make policy and planning decisions.
>
> There is increased awareness among students of career choices and resources for identifying employment options

EPMT was an ambitious and complex project with inter-related components designed to mutually reinforce each other, both within the project and in the wider development program of the Ministry of Education.

In many areas the project has achieved more than originally envisioned by those who designed it: it has enabled the Ministry to embrace reform, to conceptualize an efficiency-effectiveness-quality paradigm shift.

The Continuous Assessment component has brought about real change in teaching-learning practices in classrooms in grades one to four. We have evidence now that teaching in English and Mathematics is more interactive (monograph research), and children are learning more and better (impact study). Real meaning has been given to the motto "every child is a successful learner."

Head teacher management training has improved management of schools at both primary and secondary levels. The strident and open criticisms in the press a few years ago have dwindled to reporting cases of mismanagement worthy of attention. The INSET team have embraced the training methodologies developed in the early years of the project and have conducted six cycles of training covering the whole country - five of which have been undertaken without technical assistance. INSET has matured to such an extent that it is now embarking on an exciting program of change and transformation, where in-service work will be devolved to the school level.

A Management Information System was put in place with capable people in position to continue providing information on demand. Six years ago the Ministry was severely criticized by a public sector review for having an extremely weak planning capacity and virtually no information to make rational decisions from. Today the unit boasts a policy support model which has helped to analyze and determine future policies and programs. A teacher data base exists which has helped the process of rationalizing the teaching force at a time when resources in the country are becoming increasingly constrained.

Organizational Development work has helped to analyze data and transform information from the MIS into coherent and useful policies and procedures. A National Education Symposium brought together 400 prominent people to review the state of education in the country and to support the Ministry's efforts to bring about change in the system. The Symposium, more than anything else, helped to galvanize the education sector and the community-at-large. It was a turning point. A Quality Working Group began to conceptualize and plan a school-level program to bring about more effective schools, within which more effective learning would take place. An education and training sector committee of the national development strategy worked hard to prepare a national education strategy, under the motto Our Children First, which has mapped out a direction for the next 25 years (the Year 20/20). This strategy embraces basic education, provides a firm endorsement of continued implementation of continuous assessment and of the need to improve school management in order to achieve greater autonomy at the school level. Organizational Development also assisted with the business of donor coordination: following a donor meeting in July 1995, ODA came on board with a great sense of good things happening in Swaziland. UNICEF pledged renewed

and increased support for basic education, and the World Bank has agreed to provide on-going non-lending support in order to bolster our efforts to bring about quality education.

Above all, the Organizational Development component has helped to bring into the open the need and desire for reform and change, as originally envisioned by the National Education Review Commission (NERCOM) report of 1985 and the EPMT project design. The National Development Strategy (NDS) Education Sector Committee has recommended the establishment of an education and training reform group whose job it will be to initiate, monitor and sustain reform with the understanding that in order to improve learning in the education sector, one needs to create a learning society that itself continues to learn in order to develop.

The transparency of project operations and implementation have been greatly assisted by the EPMT Steering Committee and Executive Committee. All major decisions concerning project implementation have been discussed in these fora. Annual work plans have been developed and approved; semi-annual and quarterly reports have been reviewed since project inception in August, 1990. It is a sign of great encouragement to the project that the steering committee will continue its work under the rubric "Basic Education Steering Committee".

Not only has the project contributed to one of USAID's pillars of development assistance - **economic growth** - by contributing toward the establishment of an efficient and high quality human resource base for sustained development and economic growth, it has also contributed to a second pillar - **democracy and governance** - by showing the way forward for transparent and open development. The steering committee was inclusive of interest groups, open in its discussions and clear in making decisions that were workable and acceptable to the majority of parties involved. The fact that its way of working will continue into the future is testimony to the desire for good management and governance in the system, and recognition of the need to make the best use of human resources in the process. Such is the stuff of reform - partnerships with those who have a genuine interest founded in debate and resulting in progress.

IV. FURTHER INPUTS EXPECTED INTO THE PROJECT:

The USAID Mission in Swaziland is closing, barely three weeks after project closure. Consequently no further USAID inputs are expected.

However, the Overseas Development Agency (ODA) of the British Government inaugurated a primary education improvement project in June, 1996. The project calls for 3 technical assistance officers qualified in teacher education and educational management to help the MOE implement reorganization of INSET. The goal is to bring in-service training closer to the classroom by redeploying staff from a centrally organized office to teacher centers in the regions. The focus of INSET

will be the school, in the mold of the effective schools reform in the U.S. This development can be attributed to the quality working group and the role of the organizational development component of the project.

In addition, the United Nations Children's' Fund (UNICEF), has identified Swaziland as the recipient of supplementary funding for the Girl Child from a Norwegian Government grant to UNICEF. These funds will be used to continue with CA work in English and math in grades 5 - 7. The Swazi team of implementers for this project are considered to be sufficiently trained and experienced to continue with this work.

It is hoped that the comprehensive primary improvement plan developed by the quality working group will attract further donor support. This is premised on the fact the MOE is presently reviewing its own resources to identify new sources of funding through re-allocation of its own resources, and increasing its budgetary allocation in the basic education sector by making new strategic decisions.

V. GOVERNMENT OF SWAZILAND (GOS) CONTRIBUTION:

Additional contributions from the Swaziland Government for the project stand at $4,280,868, from inception to closure. This is in excess of the 25 per cent of total project cost as stipulated in the project agreement, testifying to the importance of the project in the minds of local decision makers, and to the promise of sustainability of the project.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED:

Many lessons have been learned through execution of this project. Below are four key lessons which can easily be applied to other basic education projects:

1. If a project is attempting to change behavior that is deeply ingrained, or trying to change the "culture" of an organization, then a long-term project is needed. The minimum period is the seven years allotted to this project; ideally, for EPMT to have fully taken root, with assured future growth and development, at least 15 years is necessary. Taking one cohort through a school system takes 12 years. By definition, educational reform is on-going and iterative. It requires people to overcome their own mental models of education (especially prejudices). Analyses and research should be undertaken so that the new realities and demands of the system are constantly under review. This, in itself, is a time-consuming pre-occupation. Indeed, the culture of research itself requires time for nurture and growth.

2. Flexibility, both on the part of USAID and the contractor (in this case IIR), is necessary to allow project to grow "organically." It is rare that project designers can anticipate and predict how projects will evolve. It is therefore necessary for

both USAID and contractors to allow for changes and shifts of emphasis within a project in order to adapt to the changing realities that impact on the original project design. The success of EPMT is a result of such flexibility and willingness to diverge from the initial project design.

3. "Front-loading" a long-term project, that is concentrating technical assistance in the first half of a project, works best when the original TAs are available for short-term consultancies during the latter half of the project. The EPMT project benefited from the fact that several key people were available to the project over a period of several years. The original TAs were involved with the project after their initial service.

4. Twinning with the United States Peace Corps proved beneficial to the project. Technical assistance provided through this channel served the twin purpose of bringing in individuals who were prepared to adapt to the culture of the country, and who were affordable, thus stretching project resources further. In the case of EPMT a mix of younger and older generations were fielded, thus combining youthful enthusiasm with a more mature and experienced group in those areas of the project requiring these qualities.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER MONITORING, REPORTING AND EVALUATION:

A final project evaluation was conducted in July 1996, and an impact study of continuous assessment with regard to children learning was undertaken in June, 1996. Furthermore, a monograph has been prepared, describing project activities and how they unfolded in light of the original project design. These three analytical works will provide Swazi educators and decision makers with the tools for future educational development. Mechanisms are in place for further monitoring, reporting and evaluation as the project evolves further under local auspices.

Drafted: DFoster-Gross, PGDO:EPMTPACR.230:08/11/96

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